

1 What is claimed is:

2 1. A method of performing secure purchases, said method
3 comprising:

- 4 a) a customer communicating with a custodial authorizing
5 entity having custodial responsibility of account
6 parameters of said customer's pre-established account;
7 b) said customer supplying the custodial authorizing
8 entity with at least account identification data;
9 c) said customer designating a payment category;
10 d) generating a transaction code that is different from
11 said account identification data and which is
12 associated with said designated payment category;
13 e) communicating said transaction code to said customer;
14 f) terminating communication with said custodial
15 authority;
16 g) said customer communicating said transaction code to
17 a merchant in connection with a purchase having
18 defined purchase parameters;
19 h) said merchant communicating said transaction code to
20 a verifying authority;
21 i) said verifying authority utilizing said transaction
22 code to verify that said defined purchase parameters
23 are within said designated payment category; and
24 j) said verifying authority communicating a purchase
25 authorization to said merchant if said defined
26 purchase parameters are within said designated payment

category associated with said transaction code; and

k) completing the purchase.

2. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising defining said payment category as a specific maximum dollar amount, said verifying authority communicating a purchase denial if said purchase parameters of said purchase include a purchase dollar amount in excess of said maximum dollar amount.

3. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising defining said payment category as a specific dollar amount, said verifying authority communicating a purchase denial if said purchase parameters of said purchase include a purchase dollar amount different from said specific dollar amount by more than a predetermined maximum variance.

4. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising communicating information associated with offered subject matter to the customer by the merchant, pre-determining the purchase parameters of the purchase, and corresponding said designated payment category to said purchase parameters.

5. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising the custodial authorizing entity generating a transaction code which reflects at least one of said designated payment categories from a plurality of different types of said payment categories.

6. A method as recited in claim 5 further comprising defining at least one of said plurality of different types of payment categories to include amount parameters for a cost of a purchase.

1 7. A method as recited in claim 5 further comprising
2 defining at least one of said plurality of different types of
3 payment categories to include time parameters during which the
4 purchase can be completed.

5 8. A method as recited in claim 5 further comprising
6 defining at least one of the plurality of different types of
7 payment categories to include authorization for a single
8 transaction at a fixed amount for purchase within a
9 predetermined period of time.

10 9. A method as recited in claim 5 further comprising
11 defining at least one of the plurality of different types of
12 payment categories to include authorization for a single
13 transaction at a maximum amount for purchase within a
14 predetermined period of time.

15 10. A method as recited in claim 5 further comprising
16 defining at least one of the plurality of different types of
17 payment categories to include authorization for a predetermined
18 maximum number of transactions up to a maximum total purchase
19 amount.

20 11. A method as recited in claim 5 further comprising
21 defining at least one of the plurality of different types of
22 payment categories to include authorization for a predetermined
23 maximum number of transactions up to a maximum total purchase
24 amount during a predetermined time period.

25 12. A method as recited in claim 5 further comprising
26 defining at least one of the plurality of different types of

1 payment categories to include authorization for a repeating
2 transaction at a fixed amount.

3 13. A method as recited in claim 5 further comprising
4 defining at least one of the plurality of different types of
5 payment categories to include authorization for a repeating
6 transaction at a fixed amount payable at each of a fixed number
7 of time intervals.

8 14. A method as recited in claim 5 further comprising
9 defining the plurality of payment categories selectable by said
10 customer to include at least:

11 a) authorization for a single transaction at a fixed
12 amount for a purchase within a predetermined period of time,

13 b) authorization for a single transaction at a maximum
14 amount for a purchase within a predetermined period of time,

15 c) authorization for multiple transactions at a maximum
16 total amount for purchases within a predetermined time period,
17 and

18 d) authorization for a repeating transaction at a fixed
19 amount.

20 15. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising
21 defining said payment category to include a limited time
22 interval during which said transaction code is valid.

23 16. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising
24 generating a transaction code which further reflects an
25 identification of the merchant.

26 17. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein said merchant

1 communicates said transaction code to a verifying authority
2 which normally accepts and verifies credit card account
3 information in connection with purchases.

4 18. A secure purchase verification system comprising:

5 a) a custodial authorizing entity structured to issue a
6 user account to a consumer;

7 b) said custodial authorizing entity structured to bill
8 said consumer for purchases consummated in connection
9 with said user account;

10 c) said custodial authorizing entity responsive to a
11 consumer transaction request and structured to
12 generate a transaction code internally associated with
13 said user account and different from said user
14 account;

15 d) said transaction code including a payment category
16 designated by said consumer associated therewith and
17 structured to be presented to a merchant by said
18 consumer in connection with a purchase having defined
19 purchase parameters;

20 e) a verifying authority structured to receive and
21 authorize credit card transactions from said merchant;

22 f) said transaction code structured to be communicated to
23 said verifying authority by said merchant, in
24 connection with said purchase having said purchase
25 parameters, as a credit card account number utilizing
26 a credit card authorization system;

1 g) said verifying authority structured to verify that
2 said purchase parameters of said purchase correspond
3 said payment category associated with said transaction
4 code without identifying said user account, and to
5 accordingly communicate an authorization or rejection
6 to said merchant.

7 19. A secure purchase verification system as recited in
8 claim 18 wherein said payment category of said
9 transaction code includes a defined maximum purchase
10 amount.

11 20. A secure purchase verification system as recited in
12 claim 18 wherein said payment category of said
13 transaction code includes a specific purchase amount.

14 21. A secure purchase verification system as recited in
15 claim 18 wherein said payment category of said
16 transaction code includes a specific purchase amount
17 range.

18 22. A secure purchase verification system as recited in
19 claim 18 wherein said payment category of said
20 transaction code includes a defined time period for
21 commencement of said purchase.

22 23. A secure purchase verification system as recited in
23 claim 18 wherein said payment category of said
24 transaction code includes a defined plurality of
25 purchases.

26 24. A secure purchase verification system as recited in

claim 23 wherein said payment category of said transaction code includes a defined maximum purchase amount for said plurality of purchases.

25. A secure purchase verification system as recited in claim 18 wherein said payment category of said transaction code includes a defined plurality of recurring purchases.

26. A secure purchase verification system as recited in claim 25 wherein each of said defined plurality of purchases include a define purchase amount associated therewith.